

LD 2055-

G52 M3

D 2033

252 M3



LD 2065
Ge 52 A13

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

I O W A C O L L E G E ,

BY

PRESIDENT MAGOUN.

LI 2055
.G52M3

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The first movement for the founding of IOWA COLLEGE was made by "a called meeting of ministers and others," held at Denmark, March 12, 1844. It was proposed to enter a township of land, and by the sale thereof to settlers favorable to the enterprise commence an endowment. A committee of three was chosen to examine the location contemplated, who reported favorably to another and larger meeting April 16th. "The Iowa College Association" was then formed, a board of Trustees agreed upon, an Executive Committee appointed, and an agent to secure funds for the entry of land employed. The agent, Rev. Asa Turner, Jr., went East immediately, (April 26,) his expenses being defrayed by the ministers composing the Association. He met in Boston (May 28-9,) gentlemen who had just organized the "Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West" and others, who condemned the plan, and advised that a location be first secured and a fund commenced from the gifts of the churches, and gave assurance that, through the new Society, "aid may be obtained when the plan and system of instruction shall be so matured that they can secure the confidence of the Eastern mind." The agent abandoned the original plan

and returned without further effort. Had it been carried through, in all probability it would have been highly successful, and the College long since had a large endowment,—the site proposed, which had been secured by a friend of the College, embracing a superior water power “in a section of country mostly subject to entry,” and being now occupied by one of our largest and most prosperous interior towns. The sympathies also of its friends in the State would have been enlisted and fostered as they could not be by years of weakness, suspense, and disheartenment. In June 1846 it was decided to locate at Davenport, “provided the citizens would raise \$1,500 for buildings, and furnish certain specified grounds for a site,” and the members of the Association pledged themselves to raise \$100 each. Twelve Trustees were elected to secure a College charter, who incorporated themselves—with others—under the general incorporation law of the Territory, Burlington, June 4, 1847, at the last meeting of the Association. Although the amount named had not been yet subscribed (\$1,362 and thirteen lots secured) the College was located at Davenport, and a building resolved upon—“not to exceed in cost \$2,000.” The members pledged themselves to meet within one year any deficiency in the necessary funds up to the amount of \$600. In 1848 a Professor of Languages was secured (who was also Principal of the Preparatory Department) on a salary of \$500 per annum, and the Preparatory Department opened Nov. 1, 1848. In 1850 there were 26 students in Latin and 8 in Greek. The first Freshman Class of 6 was admitted to the College Department that fall. In 1854 the first Senior Class of 2 was graduated, and there were 109 names on the Catalogue. In 1856 there were 139. The Professorship of Mathematics was filled in 1851, that of Natural Science in 1853, and that of Mental and Moral Science in 1855. (See General Catalogue published this year.) Since the College was opened in

1848 there have been in all, notwithstanding its interrupted sessions and crippled condition, more than a thousand young persons under instruction.

But the work of raising funds was found, on the plan substituted for the original one, almost impossible to carry forward, though temporary agents were often appointed, sometimes a number of them, for the State and for the East. In 1849 at the meeting of the Congregational Association in Davenport, there was subscribed \$442,65,—all but four of the subscribers being ministers. At the meeting at Dubuque in 1850 the sum of \$450 was raised. “The wives also of the ministers, anxious to share in the enterprise of founding this College, resolved to raise \$100 *out of their own resources*, and \$70 was subscribed by fourteen persons who were present.” At the meeting in Muscatine in 1852 the ministers again subscribed \$153, and at the meeting in Mt. Pleasant in 1853, a subscription was made of \$711. Dea. P. W. Carter, of Waterbury, Conn., gave that year \$5,080 to endow the Professorship of Languages. In 1856 Rev. E. Adams, Agent, secured about \$11,000 on subscription, a large part of which was realized. The Society for Western Colleges made appropriations from time to time to the amount of about \$6,000, for current expenses.

The College has never been attached to any ecclesiastical body. Like the *New England* Colleges, founded by the fathers, its Charter requires neither Trustees nor Instructors to be connected with any particular denomination. Although nearly all its support has come from Congregationalists, in Iowa and at the East, it has had both Trustees and instructors of other denominations. Presbyterians (N. S.) were in the first Board and the original “Iowa College Association,” and took part in the proceedings down to 1852, when the Des Moines Presbytery proposed to undertake the founding of a Professorship, on condition that it should be “always subject

to the control of the Presbytery." The Trustees responded that they would be happy to have the Professorship endowed on the principles "upon which the members of Des Moines Presbytery and the Congregational Association of Iowa united in founding the College, and the rules and regulations that are usually adopted in the endowment of Professorships in Literary Institutions." Nothing more was done by the Presbyterians, and they gradually ceased to be members of the Board of Trustees.

The original site of the College was on the bluff in Davenport overlooking the river. The first building is now the residence of S. S. Gillett, Esq. In 1854 the city having laid out a street through the grounds, destroying their use for College purposes, and declining to vacate it on request of the Trustees, they were obliged to remove to a new location farther back. A fine stone building was there erected, and a boarding house of wood. The new grounds were of great beauty, containing nearly ten acres, part of which however was granted to the public for adjacent streets. In 1857 the city took steps to extend a street through these grounds, and in 1858 it was decided to dispose of them and again remove. The funds of the College were insufficient to make needed improvements, or sustain the Faculty,—now consisting of four professors,—the unsettled condition of things prevented progress,—through misrepresentation and breach of trust by the financial officer the treasury had become helplessly embarrassed, and in 1859 the property was sold to Bishop H. W. Lee and others for an Episcopal College, the first of the proceeds being devoted to liquidating the debts. Proposals were invited for a new site.


Meantime, another institution had been founded at Grinnell, Poweshiek Co., by a colony from New England. The town was laid out in May 1854, a building for worship and school purposes being immediately erected, and a church organized in May 1855.] "All funds arising

from the sale of town lots over and above the original cost" were devoted to education, and in December 1855 the "Grinnell University" was founded. "The University was the soul, the animating spirit of the colony." A "Literary Fund" was commenced, by the payment of \$20,00 to which any male citizen became an "Elector," with power to vote in the election of half the Trustees and the President. A school had been commenced in 1856 by the present Carter Prof. of Languages, which was now opened to students in the higher branches, of whom there were in 1859 more than thirty. The Trustees of the "University" offered the College the property of the institution, including site of twenty acres and the "Seminary" partly finished, together with an additional citizens' subscription,—which was accepted, Sept. 1858, and the College exercises at Davenport suspended in December. The College professors resigned, and in Sept. 1859, preparatory classes were organized in the College building at Grinnell. The first Freshman class entered Sept. 1861. The present Prof. of Languages was elected in 1861, the President in 1862, the Prof. of Mathematics in 1863, the Professors of Natural Science and Rhetoric, and the Principals of the Preparatory and Ladies' Departments in 1864. Most of the instructors entered at once upon their duties.

In 1861, the Congregational churches raised, for current expenses of the College \$285,97, in 1862, \$367,34, and in 1863, \$. In the Spring of that year Rev. J. C. Holbrook, of Dubuque, went East by arrangement with the Society for Western Colleges to obtain \$2,000 pledged by the Society to the current expenses of the College. It was agreed, upon earnest representation, that if he could secure pledges also for future endowment funds he should do so. The prospects of the government and the country were not bright; benevolent contributions had been diminished by the war; and the resources



of the College Society so largely cut off that a tract was issued by the Secretary to show that its mission was not yet ended, or disbanding a necessity. The success of the agency was unexpectedly so great in a short time as to induce the Society to consent to his raising \$20,000 for endowment, and at length \$50,000, of which about \$40,000 has been secured—in funds and property—including a pledge of \$10,000 from Hon. Samuel Williston of East Hampton, Mass., conditioned upon the whole amount being obtained. This is the first general effort for an endowment, and is still going forward. Hon. James W. Grimes, U. S. Senator from Iowa, has recently given a section of land to found Scholarships, and other benefactors are remembering the College with similar gifts. The Institution has now about \$100,000 of property of which half is productive. It has seven instructors, including President, four Professors, and Principals of the Preparatory and Ladies' Departments. It has twenty-four graduates,—ten from the Ladies' Department,—and two hundred and eight undergraduates in the four departments. The attendance during the last year has increased beyond all its accommodations, and Boarding and Lodging Houses have been provided which will accommodate about seventy additional students. More recitation rooms, with larger library and cabinet rooms, and a chapel of twice the capacity of the present one, are imperatively needed, as well as the endowments. The increase of students is such that more lodging rooms will be required as soon as they can be prepared, and rooms for a Normal Department or Training School for Teachers. A nobler or more promising opportunity for far-seeing benevolence could hardly be opened, and donations for these objects are urgently requested from the friends of Christian Education in this and other States.



LD 2035
G52 M3



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 892 429 8

Hollinger Corp.
pH 8.5